

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

IO-10 /070 W

----- 035554

R 081630Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7274

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, SP, EI

SUBJECT: IRISH GOVERNMENT ON SPAIN

1. THE IRISH DECISION TO RETAIN ITS AMBASSADOR IN MADRID WHILE MOST OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITHDREW THEIR AMBASSADORS HAS SPARKED A LIVELY DEBATE HERE. ALTHOUGH THE IRISH WERE, IN GENERAL, PUZZLED BY THE STRONG EUROPEAN REACTION, THE INITIAL FEELING WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONGLY CRITICAL OF THE GOI FOR GETTING ISOLATED FROM ITS EC

BRETHERN AND ESPECIALLY FOR GOING AGAINST THE VATICAN.
A TYPICAL COMMENT (IRISH TIMES, OCT. 4): "HAS THE COALITION
(I.E. THE COALITION GOVERNMENT) JOINED THE SPANISH FALANGE? ...
IRELAND'S STANDING IN EUROPE IS LOWER THIS WEEK THAN IT EVER HAS
BEEN SINCE ACCESSION. ALL THE SPLENDID WORK OF OUR POLITICIANS AND
OFFICIALS DURING OUR PRESIDENCY OF COUNCIL EARLIER THIS YEAR IS IN
DANGER OF BEING FORGOTTEN." HOWEVER, WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S STAUNCH
DEFENCE OF ITS POLICY AND NOW WITH THE RETURN OF THE GERMAN AND
BRITISH AMBASSADORS PUBLIC OPINION HERE HAS GENERALLY SHIFTED TO
SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT. ANOTHER COMMENT (IRISH INDEPENDENT) ON
OCT. 7: "... OUR GOVERNMENT DESERVES THE GREATEST RESPECT BY HAVING
THE MORAL COURAGE TO STAND ALONE ... IT HAS GIVEN THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY A TAST OF MORAL LEADERSHIP BY REFUSING TO KOW-TOW TO
DOUBLE-THINK STANDARDS."

2. ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OVERT CRITICISM OF
THE IRISH POSITION FROM OTHER EC COUNTRIES, THE PAPERS HAVE PLAYED
UP SEVERE CRITICISM FROM THE EC COMMISSION. PARTICULARLY PROMINENT
COVERAGE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE COMMENTS OF EC COMMISSION VICE
PRESIDENT SPINELLI, WHO SAID HE "COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE IRISH
ATTITUDE." A NUMBER OF IRISH OFFICIALS ATTACHED TO THE COMMISSION,
WHO HAPPEN TO BE FROM THE OPPOSITION FIANNA FAIL PARTY, PUBLICLY
DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM THE GOI POLICY.

3. AS THE SPANISH AFFAIR MUSHROOMED LAST WEEK IT WAS FIRST ASSUMED
THAT THE GOI HAD MERELY FAILED TO ACT BY DEFAULT SINCE FOREIGN
MINISTER FITZGERALD WAS BUSY IN THE U.S., BUT OVER THE WEEKEND IT
BECAME APPARENT FROM INTERVIEWS WITH FITZGERALD AND HIS
SPOKESMAN HERE JOHN KELLY THAT THE DECISION WAS A CALCULATED ONE.
KELLY SAID: (A) THAT THE RECALLING OF AMBASSADORS AFTER THE
FACT WAS A FUTILE EXERCISE, (B) THAT WITHIN TWO MONTHS MOST OF
THE AMBASSADORS WOULD BE BACK AT THEIR POSTS AND NOTHING WOULD
HAVE CHANGED IN SPAIN; (C) IT WAS PLAIN THAT THE SPANISH PEOPLE
ARE BACKING THEIR GOVERNMENT (D) THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW AMBASSA-
DORS WAS NOT AN EC DECISION AND THERE IS NOTHING IN THE EC
CONVENTION WHICH FORCES A GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW "TAMELY" IN THE
WAKE OF DECISIONS BY OTHER EC GOVERNMENTS.

4. COMMENT: THE GOI REASONS FOR NOT JUMPING ON THE ANTI-SPANISH
BANDWAGON CAN BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, BUT IT IS APPARENT THAT
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FITZGERALD MISCALCULATED THE REACTION BOTH HERE AND IN EUROPE.
LAST WEEK SENIOR MFA COUNSELOR PATRICK MACKERNAN (THE TOP MFA
OFFICIALS WERE AT THE UNGA) TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT THE SPANISH
BUSINESS WAS AN AFFAIR OF THE MOMENT, WOULD QUICKLY BLOW OVER,
AND THAT THE GOI WAS DETERMINED TO TREAT IT IN A "LOW KEY" MANNER.
HOWEVER, THE EVENT HAS SHOWN THAT THE IRISH MISCALCULATED THE FER-
VENCY THE AFFAIR GENERATED. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE GENERAL ATTITUDE
HERE, BOTH IN GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL PUBLIC, WAS GENUINE

BEWILDERMENT AT THE COURSE OF EVENTS. THE IRISH, WITH THEIR OWN TROUBLES IN THE NORTH AND DAILY KILLINGS, HAVE LITTLE INCLINATION TO INDULGE IN MORAL CRUSADES ABOUT CONDITIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THE LONELY CROWD OF 20 DEMONSTRATORS, ALL FROM THE MINUSCULE IRISH COMMUNIST PARTY, AT THE SPANISH EMBASSY ON SATURDAY WERE TYPICAL. CURLEY

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